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Tiefland

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TIEFLAND

(THE LOWLAND.)

*Music Drama
in a Prelude and
Two Acts.*

Text after A. GUIMERA by
RUDOLPH LÖTHAR.

English Version by
R. H. ELKIN.

Music by
EUGENE D'ALBERT.

Price ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE net.

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ED. BOTE & G. BOCK,
Königliche Hofmusikalienhändler.

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Characters.

SEBASTIANO, a rich landed proprietor.

TOMMASO, the village elder, aged 80.

MORUCCIO, Miller's man

MARTA.

PEPA.

ANTONIA.

ROSALIA.

NURI.

PEDRO, a shepherd

NANDO, a shepherd

A PRIEST.

} In Sebastiano's service.

The opera plays partly on a mountain pasturage in the Pyrenees—partly in the Spanish Lowland of Catalonia at the foot of the Pyrenees.

Stage directions: Right and left as from the auditorium.



The Lowland.

PRELUDE.

A rocky slope, high up in the Pyrenees. From the extreme foreground the stage slopes upward, almost half as high as the proscenium. On this slope, on the left, stands a primitive shepherd's hut. In front of it a well and a trough. On the left the declivity is lost among boulders. Behind the hill, which thus occupies the whole width of the stage, a deep hollow appears to lie. Beyond the hollow rise the snow-covered peaks of the Pyrenees in strange phantastic forms. In the centre a huge glacier, with an enormous rocky mass beside it.

SCENE 1.

(About 3 o'clock a. m. Starlit sky. The whole background is invisible—veiled in mists. On the stage: dawn, in which the outlines of the hut can just be dimly distinguished. The stage is empty.)

NANDO (invisible from below).

Ohe!

PEDRO (invisible, above on the left, replies).

Ohe!

(After a while Nando comes in sight on the right front and Pedro appears above, by the hut.)

PEDRO.

The Lord in Heav'n be praised.

NANDO.

For evermore!

PEDRO.

Is it toward the East your flock you're leading?

NANDO.

Up to the mountains.

PEDRO.

Mind the wolves up yonder!

NANDO.

I have my slings and I've my trusty dog.

PEDRO.

And I have faith in God!

(Both now meet on the middle of the hill. From the hollow below the tinkle of sheepbells is heard.)

'Twill be a lovely morning.

NANDO.

When all the mist has vanished.

PEDRO.

Give the good shepherds greeting.

NANDO.

Have you not seen them?

PEDRO.

Three months have now gone by
 Since I have seen a living soul;
 And 'tis six months ago
 Since I held speech with any;
 And when you disappear behind the mountain,
 Then many weeks and months may vanish.
 Nay, perhaps a year,
 Before I speak a word with human being.

NANDO.

And is your lonely life not dreadful?

PEDRO.

I glory in my life!
 I dream by night, and dream by day,
 And feel so happy. Who could be happier?
 Two Paternosters ev'ry night I say;
 The first I say is for the parents
 I never knew.

But dwelling up aloft by God's high throne,
 They both are watching, full of love, o'er me
 But now my second Paternoster;
 That is a special prayer to God Himself.
 I beg him ev'ry night
 To send a wife to make life perfect.

NANDO (laughs).

A wife? Ha, ha! Do you know women? Why, have you ever
 talked to one, or seen one?

PEDRO.

Not yet. How should a woman come up here?
 But once a year from afar I have gazed at them
 When in the vale below to church I went.
 But I feel certain—that if God desires—
 I, too, shall get a wife all in due season.

NANDO (laughs).

PEDRO.

There is no cause to laugh. I mean it, truly.
 Last night, as I was lying in my mountain shanty,
 I just had finished saying my first prayer aloud.
 Starting my second one,
 But with the first few words I fell asleep,
 And on my lips my pray'r remained unspoken.
 And dreaming, suddenly I saw my flock
 Take refuge in the valley yonder.
 I gave it chase, and placing a stone
 In my sling I threw it ahead
 To keep the sheep from straying further.
 The stone dropt in the Lake of Roccabruna.
 The placid water seethes and boils
 As if it were a caldron.
 The vapors thicken, then they part asunder,
 And from their depths arises a mysterious form.
 A wondrous shining robe, a snowy arm,
 A head with flowing golden hair——
 "The witch!" I shriek aloud, "the mountain witch!"
 But no! So fair no witch could ever be.
 And suddenly the raging lake grows placid.
 The apparition glides across the mere, approaches me.
 She was so fair——that I cannot describe her.
 And as she came the trees bowed down before her,
 The buds awoke and turned to flower, and
 The birds were singing as ne'er before;

They trilled and warbled till the hills resounded,
 And all the world appeared to welcome her.
 The apparition smiled and glided up to me,
 Quite close to me. Then I knelt down before her,
 And finished saying my second Paternoster.
 And now I know who the fair vision was:
 The Virgin Mary in my dream I saw,
 She came from Heaven to tell me God
 Will send me wife and happiness.

NANDO.

You think that wife and happiness are one?
 Hear what I tell you: between the two,
 A bit of Heaven and the whole of Hell you'll find!
 You'll find that out yourself. Be sure of that!

PEDRO.

I only wonder
 From which direction she will come to me?
 Now mark: within my sling a stone I now am placing,
 And swinging it around. My eyes are closed.
 And where the stone will fall, 'tis from that side
 That she will come to me.

(He throws the stone).

SEBASTIANO'S VOICE (from far below on the right).

Confound you fellows! Don't you see
 That some one's coming?
 This stone of yours had very nearly hit me!

NANDO.

Why, who comes here?

PEDRO.

What do I care? They can't want me!

NANDO (looking down into the hollow).

The master's coming! Don Sebastiano!
 Surely you know the master? Whate'er you see
 Belongs to him. The meadows, pastures, corn fields,
 The wood and river, herd and hut,
 The village yonder and the mill stream,
 Ev'rything you can think upon, is his.
 And in his service are we all, we shepherds,
 Those on the mountain-top and in the valley.

And next to him, that is the elder
Of our village. Full ninety years
Tommaso carries on his shoulders.

PEDRO (rising reluctantly).

Into my hut I'm going. If they wish
For aught from me, then let them come and fetch me.

(He slowly goes up to the hut).

NANDO (looking down with eager interest).

And with the men there is, if I see right,
A comely maiden ! What can they be wanting ?

(He laughs)

Perhaps the Lord has kept His word and sent
A wife for our Pedro !

SCENE 2.

(Enter Sebastiano, Marta and Tommaso).

SEBASTIANO.

Is Pedro not here ?

NANDO.

He is inside his cabin yonder.

SEBASTIANO.

Tommaso, go and fetch him out. (To Nando)
And you, bring us bread and milk and cheese.
The way was long, and I am hungry.

Tommaso and Nando go up to the hut, which Tommaso enters.

Nando busies himself outside—fetches milk, etc.)
(Marta and Sebastiano alone in the foreground).

MARTA.

Tell me why you dragged me here ?

SEBASTIANO.

Leave that to me ! Besides, my child,
I have got a plan for you.

MARTA.

Tell me, sir, for Christ's dear sake,
What you purpose.

SEBASTIANO.

Have no fear!
You have always served me truly,
And you know I paid you well.
As a beggar-maid you came
Wand'ring hither with that ancient
Scamp, your father.
And you pleased me.
So I made your father my miller
Just to win your heart, my beauty.
Then the mill I gave to you
And made you mine in payment.
That's no more than fair and equal.

MARTA.

Oh, 'tis dreadful ; altho' I plead
With you to set me free,
'Tis in vain. You are the master.

SEBASTIANO.

Yes, your master ! And as such
I will now command you :
(Pedro appears above)
Look at that young fellow there!
Handsome, eh, and young and hearty?
Him I choose to be your husband.

MARTA (shrinking back in horror).
Rather will I leap down yonder !

SEBASTIANO.

Folly ! Madness ! Stay a bit.
Wait until I have explained it !
'Tis no idle whim of mine ;
What is, that has to be.

MARTA.

Oh, have mercy !

SEBASTIANO.

Listen, child,
Just because I wish your welfare
I choose Pedro for your husband.

MARTA.

(Freeing herself from Sebastiano, who was holding her hand).

Let go, sir. I will not, will not!

SEBASTIANO.

Marta, look at him just once!

MARTA.

No! (She wrenches herself free and runs off).

(Pedro, who has come quite close, stands staring at her open-mouthed)

PEDRO.

Holy Virgin! Oh, how lovely!

SCENE 3.

Pedro, Sebastiano, Tommaso.

(Nando has brought vessel with milk, and has then returned to the hut, where he busies himself unconcernedly).

SEBASTIANO.

Well, good Pedro, tell me, pray,
Are you quite content here?

PEDRO.

Why, indeed, most gracious master.

SEBASTIANO.

Don't you wish for something better?

PEDRO.

Don't see how!

SEBASTIANO.

Shepherd life is very fine,
But you surely must know that
There are better things than that?

Look down there in yonder valley,
 Stands a mill of mine.
 Will you not be miller there?

PEDRO.

If there's corn enough to grind
 Well, why not?

SEBASTIANO.

And besides this, you're to have
 The miller's maid as wife.

PEDRO.

If the damsel pleases me
 And I her, I'll not say no.

SEBASTIANO.

Why, you've seen her!
 Well, will she do?

PEDRO.

Are you making jest of me?
 Am I dreaming still?

SEBASTIANO.

Sit down here and hark to me:
 My mill requires a head
 Since the miller died.
 My choice fell on you, my lad.
 If you care, then leave your hills.
 You take Marta as your wife
 And I take you as miller.

PEDRO.

Like a swarm of bees all your
 Words are buzzing round my ears—
 Are you jesting? Can you mean it?
 May I thank the saints in heaven?
 Will my dream be realized?

TOMMASO.

Full many miles from here I dwell,
 Far off beyond the mountains.
 The master came to me,
 And I gave him your name.
 Tho' it is many years since I was here,
 I know you well.

You are an honest fellow!
 Say yes, my son, and take what God has sent you,
 Your master means you well. Thank him for this.
 May God, Who seeth ev'rything and guides us all,
 Watch over your new dwelling, and send you
 Peace and plenty.

SEBASTIANO.

Your hand upon it.

PEDRO.

Shall? May I?
 Do you think she'll have me?
 Won't she object that I'm too plain for her?
 She may say, "No, thanks!" look on me with scorn?

SEBASTIANO.

Leave that to me to answer for!
 'Twill be allright.

PEDRO.

She fled at sight of me.

SEBASTIANO.

Women are like that.
 Get yourself ready, come down in the valley.
 To-morrow is your wedding day—
 All preparations I have made.

PEDRO.

To-morrow? So much luck to-morrow?

TOMMASO.

Good luck ne'er comes too soon!
 Now it is here, don't let it go!
 (Sebastiano and Tommaso prepare to depart.)

SEBASTIANO.

'Tis settled then; I'll wait in the mill
 And bring your wife to you.

PEDRO.

To-morrow!

TOMMASO.

God's blessing on your path!
 (Exeunt Sebastiano and Tommaso.)

SCENE 4.

Pedro. Nando.

PEDRO.

Well, did you hear?
 I've got a wife, a gift from heaven.
 I'm going down——

NANDO.

The Lowland tempts you?
 The houses there are cramped, the mountains far,
 The people crowded close together,
 The sun himself is dull, and gray the daylight,
 And men fight and nag and quarrel
 Without ceasing. The Lowland tempts you.

PEDRO.

'Tis my star that calls!
 See that our flock is safe until our master
 Sends up another shepherd in my place.

(Meanwhile the mists have dispersed and the sun rises in full glory
 over the glacier.)

Now one last greeting to my mountains,
 I know you ev'ry one, ev'ry crag and summit,
 And ev'ry chasm, and ev'ry peaceful meadow.
 Here did I bask in thy golden radiance, O sun,
 Befriend me now, and shine upon my path.

(Pedro goes down the path. Already half behind the scenes.)

See that my flock is safe; be watchful, Nando;
 Mind that the wolf does not come!
 Look, how they're flocking and crowding around me!
 Farewell, be sure that down below
 I the Lowland, I will not forget you!
 Nor you, my good and trusty dog!
 Farewell! Think too of me sometimes!

(He has quite disappeared from sight, his voice sounds from below,
 growing more and more distant).

The sun is shining on my downward path,
 The Lowland calls me!

(His voice dies away).

The curtain falls.

Act I.

The interior of the mill. On the right, the big mill wheel, which is not working. Above it a very roughly constructed wooden trough which has no water in it. On the left, a door approached by two staircases, and hidden by a curtain. On the right, a small door. In the background the huge entrance gate, through which, when it is open, one can see far into the landscape. Far on the horizon the outlines of the glacier of the Prelude can be distinctly discerned. Above the gate a wooden gallery runs, at half the height of the Proscenium. On the left in front a large hearth. Sacks of corn, millstones, etc., lie about. Shortly before sunset. Moruccio alone on the stage, busy sieving corn.

The curtain rises.

SCENE I.

Moruccio the miller's man, Pepa, Antonia, Rosalia, come rushing in.

PEPA.

Tell us pray, is it true?

ANTONIA.

Is it really true?

ROSALIA.

Tell us! speak! do answer!

PEPA.

Do be quick and answer!

Is it true that Marta's marrying?

MORUCCIO.

(Meanwhile laconically goes on emptying his sieve and refilling it with fresh corn.)

"If you wait till the church doors open
You will see the bride."

PEPA.

You're to answer what we ask! Don't you hear?
We want to know. . . .

ROSALIA.

Whether Marta?

ANTONIA.

Means to wed.

PEPA.

Is it really true?

ROSALIA.

Or just a rumor?

ANTONIA.

Or just a falsehood?

ALL THREE.

Do be quick and tell us!

Answer! Quick! Your answer!

MORUCCIO (as above.)

"If you wait till the church doors open
You will see the bride."

PEPA.

Ah! you're angry! 'Tis no wonder
That Marta won't have you.
You would like to be the miller!
It is close upon a year
Since the miller went away.
But yet Marta won't take you.

ANTONIA AND ROSALIA.

Won't take you!

PEPA.

You're too old, too ugly.
You're a crosspatch!

ANTONIA.

Gruff and surly!

ROSALIA (coaxingly.)

If we beg you very nicely,
You'll be kind and tell us, won't you?

MORUCCIO (as before.)

"If you wait till the church doors open
You will see the bride."

ANTONIA.

You're the one who's waiting.

PEPA.

Where is Marta?

ROSALIA.

Yes, where is she?

ANTONIA.

Is she in the mill?

MORUCCIO (shrugs his shoulders.)

PEPA.

Let him be, the surly fellow.

SCENE 2.

(The former. Nuri who enters by the gate knitting a jersey.
She remains standing on the threshold).

NURI.

Good evening!

All my chicks are roosting in the barn at last

And are safe asleep.

May I come in?

ANTONIA.

Yes, come in.

NURI.

And you promise not to scold me

As you always do

When I come to see Marta?

She loves me well,

Better than you.

PEPA.

Any news?

ANTONIA.

What's the latest?

ROSALIA.

Answer—speak and tell us!

NURI (absent mindedly).

Why, what can I have to tell you?

PEPA.

Have you seen Tommaso?

NURI.

Yes, I've been to see him,
 And he told me lots of things.
 Oh, so many, and so lovely!

THE THREE WOMEN.

Well then, tell us what?

NURI.

He said to me:
 Look my child, all that you can see
 Here as far as sight can reach,
 Ev'rything belongs to our master,
 To our lord Sebastiano.
 'The cottage where you dwell,
 'The mill beside the stream,
 'My cabin on the mountain side,
 'The manor-farm with turret and high roof
 'Wherein our master lives,
 All that, and all that is up on the heights
 And in the vale below,
 Ev'rything belongs to our master
 To our lord Sebastiano.

ANTONIA.

Why there's nothing new in that!

PEPA.

Things we've known since we were children.

NURI.

Wait a bit, I know some more—
 He said to me:
 If I journey, from to-day until
 To-morrow evening, walking, walking,
 On and on without a stop,
 All the fields and all the forests,
 All the meadows which I see
 Upon my journey,
 All the rivers, all the brooklets,
 Ev'ry waterfall,
 Ev'rything belongs to our master
 To our lord Sebastiano.
 And if I catch a butterfly,
 At liberty I have to set it,
 For it too belongs to our master.
 And if a lizard runs across my path,
 I've no right to chase it,
 It belongs to our master.
 The flowers which I'm gathering
 Belong to him.
 The bird that sings in the shady tree,
 And the eagle that circles aloft,
 They all are his.
 Ev'rything belongs to our master
 To our lord Sebastiano.

PEPA.

All this we know quite well.

NURI.

I didn't; I knew it not;
 And Tommaso, who has just come down
 From his mountain home
 He knows it all.

PEPA.

And where is Tommaso now?

NURI.

With the master he has climbed up there,
 High up there, where there are glaciers

Lying close beside the meadows.
 'Tis a shepherd lad they fetch.
 And the shepherd, think—just think—
 He is coming —
 This very day, is coming here
 To wed our Marta.

THE WOMEN.

Now at last, we've got the truth!

MORUCCIO.

(who has been going to and fro and has heard all).
 To the devil with these gossips,
 Now they've heard the news they wanted!

ANTONIA.

What, this evening? At whose command?

NURI.

Whose command?
 Why 'twas the master.
 He commands and is obeyed.
 He commanded the wedding
 Of Marta and the shepherd.
 (Importantly) Long ago I knew
 That she belong'd to our master.
 What that meant I did not know.

ANTONIA.

What's that you say?

NURI.

I say, what I heard one evening.

PEPA.

Why did you never tell us?

NURI.

I was ashamed to,
 Can hardly tell you why.

THE WOMEN.

Well, then, tell us, hurry, speak!

NURI.

'Twas on a summer eve,
 The moon had risen behind the willows,
 And I lay resting there.
 Well, along the pathway
 Came Marta and the master.
 I could hear that she was crying,
 And I heard how she said:
 "Yes, I know, too well I know
 That I am yours !
 Ne'er shall I escape from you !"
 Oh, she sobbed so that I scarce
 Could hear what she was saying.
 Then the master said:
 "And tho' you take another for your husband
 And tho' I take another wife,
 I'll yet be thine for ever, ever thine !"
 I heard it with my own ears.
 She was crying and the master went on whisp'ring.
 But explain to me, what can it mean ?
 How can the master say to Marta
 He belongs to her ?
 That she's his
 Is quite simple,
 For I know he owns us all.
 But what could he mean by saying:
 "I'm ever thine, still ever thine ?"

PEPA.

'Tis nought to you what he could mean by it !

MORUCCIO.

Be quiet, women, here she comes !

SCENE 3.

The above—Marta.

(The women expect Marta to enter by the curtained door and keep their eyes fixed on this. But she comes from the Mill and through the door on the right. With drooping head she advances to the center of the stage without perceiving the women. As soon, however, as she becomes aware of their presence, she hurries out through the curtained door).

NURI.

Oh, she is gone.

PEPA.

Marta, Marta, won't you hear?
Just to spite you we will come and see your wedding.

ROSALIA.

Can it be that she will dare,
How can she dare to marry?
Thus to enter holy wedlock?

(Exit Moruccio through the gate at the back.)

ANTONIA.

And the duffer has no notion?
What a donkey! What a ninny!
No idea and thinks—ha, ha,
Thinks that Marta—ha, ha, ha!
(All three laugh.)

NURI.

Tell me, pray, what makes you laugh?

PEPA.

Surely weddings should be merry!

ROSALIA.

More than ever *this* wedding!

ANTONIA.

Ev'rybody will be laughing,
When they hear what we've to tell them,
That our Marta—ha, ha, ha!
And the shepherd—ha, ha!
What a duffer!

PEPA.

And we all of us are coming
As a bridal escort gay!

ROSALIA.

Merry, merry we will make it!

MARTA

(appears in the door above on the left crying with vexation).

Oh, go away!
I want nobody near me?

PEPA (hypocritically).

But, my dearie, pretty darling,
Won't you tell us why !

ANTONIA.

As we know it all already !

MARTA.

Leave me, I tell you, leave me, go !

ROSALIA.

Why, we only came here darling——

MARTA.

Go, I tell you, hurry, quick !

(The women do not stir. Marta seizes their baskets which they had set down on the ground and throws them out of the gate.)

Out with them and with you !

PEPA.

Holy Mother, give us help.

(Exeunt all the women.)

NURI.

And I, must I go also, Marta ?
I'm your little Nuri.

MARTA (tenderly.)

You dearie, Nuri, my child ?
Come, kiss me dear.

NURI.

Why your cheeks are wet with tears.

MARTA.

No, no.

NURI.

Do be merry !

MARTA.

Oh, for the merry heart
That was mine when a child !
Nevermore shall I be glad !
Nevermore shall I be merry !

NURI.

'Tis your wedding, is it not ?

MARTA (bitterly).

'Tis my wedding Yes, that is so.
Why was I not faithful to my "No" ?
It is madness, it is wicked, this marriage.
How unhappy my lot is !
None to help me, none to give me aid !

NURI.

I'll stand by you, Marta,
I am with you.

MARTA (without hearing her).

No one brings me aid in my sore need !
And this Pedro, how I hate him !
He my husband ?
No, rather will I die !
Peace I pray for !
Nought but peace I pray for !

(A voice is heard outside.)

Go, my child, that is Sebastiano.
If he sees me weeping
He'll beat me I fear.

NURI.

That he shall not !

MARTA.

Would you prevent him ?
If I were but sure
That he would kill me,
I'd be weeping, weeping till

NURI.

How you puzzle me !
Who dare do any harm to you ?

MARTA.

Go, my love, and ask no more—
(Pushes Nuri out.)

SCENE 4.

MARTA (alone).

His am I, his !
His property !
Now and ever !
Oh, that he had cast me off !
Now, I shall ne'er escape from him,
Never again be free !
Holy Mother of our sorrows !
Wherefore am I punished so ?
Was I sinful, was I bad ?
His am I, his, his property.
Why this torment ?
Why this suff'ring ?
Ah, I'm but a girl and weak,
And I wandered by the stream,
Had not strength to take the plunge.
Free it would have made me—free in death !
Ah, but I was weak and frail !
My resistance melts away before his word !
His am I, his ! His property !
Holy Mother, Virgin Mary,
Help me in my hour of need !

(A noise from without).

Can they be coming to fetch me ?
Can it be that lout,
May heaven curse him !
I will not see him !

(Exit quickly into her room).

SCENE 5.

Outside before the open gate.

THE PEASANTS.

He's there !

NURI.

Where ? Show me where ?

PEPA.

Why, down the hill, can you not see ?

ROSALIA.

The bridegroom !

ANTONIA.

The bridegroom !

(All laugh and hurry off towards the left).

MORUCCIO (draws Tommaso into the center).
Here, Tommaso, a word !

TOMMASO.

What is it, friend ?

MORUCCIO.

Is this the first time that you have come hither ?

TOMMASO.

The first, indeed my son—
The mountain's lofty summit is my home,
And in this vale I never yet set foot.

MORUCCIO.

But Sebastiano our master, him you know ?

TOMMASO.

A righteous master, a noble lord,
God prosper him !

MORUCCIO.

Why then you do not know ?

TOMMASO.

Know what? Explain!

MORUCCIO.

There's but one point to settle.
Whether Pedro is a wicked man
Or just a simple fool.

TOMMASO.

What is your meaning?
Ah, I take you now!
This Marta has slipped thro' your hands?
You wanted her yourself?

MORUCCIO.

The Lord preserve me!

TOMMASO.

Explain yourself then.

MORUCCIO.

That is quickly done. (He sits down).
She and her father came as beggars to these parts. . .
The devil knows whether he was her father—
A lovely child, there's no denying.
Our lord and master said so too, lord Sebastiano.
This Mill he gave into the charge of the old rascal,
To please the pretty daughter,
And he and Marta—
The rest you can supply yourself.

TOMMASO.

That is a falsehood! Must be false I say!

MORUCCIO.

Nay, let me finish first.
'Tis well that you should learn
Why he has got a husband for her now:
He's badly off, is lord Sebastiano.
The noble lord has debts—
He knows not where to turn—
The bailiffs press,
And his estate goes to the dogs
Unless some help be found.

This help a wealthy wife——
 Alone can bring him.
 But he can't get a wife till he has
 Silenced all the gossip in the neighborhood.
 The time has come when he must break with Marta.
 The world demands it,
 And therefore, as you see,
 His Marta has to wed this fool.

TOMMASO (rises).

That is a falsehood.

MORUCCIO.

Find me a man down here
 Who does not know it !

TOMMASO.

I won't believe——

MORUCCIO.

If you're an honest man, you must despise
 All three as I do.

TOMMASO.

Despicable rogue !

MORUCCIO.

Well, then, I see you're not an honest man.

(As they are both on the point of assaulting each other with their sticks, the noise of the crowd outside is heard and they pause).

SCENE 6.

(Pedro, Moruccio, Nuri, Antonia, Rosalia, Pepa, men and women, noise and crowd. The dusk gradually deepens into night).

PEPA (outside the gate).

He's coming, hurry !

ROSALIA.

Pedro comes.

ANTONIA.

The bridegroom.

SEVERAL VOICES.

Long life to him !

PEDRO (in the gateway).

Yes, yes, here I am,
Like a chamois fleet down from the mountain
I bounded here.

Here I am !

But where is she ?

Where is my sweetheart, my bride ?

PEPA (calling).

Marta ! Marta !

ANTONIA.

Won't you come out ? Your bridegroom has arrived.

PEDRO.

(They all crowd laughingly around him).

O Lord Almighty ! All these people !

And all the people here are merry ;

One might imagine the whole lot were marrying !

Do you know Marta ?

Of course ! She is pretty, is she not ?

PEPA (ironically).

Pretty and fresh !

ANTONIA.

Fresh as a rosebud !

ROSALIA.

I wish you ev'ry joy !

PEDRO.

I thank you all.

I scarce can think it true,

That such good luck is mine.

Why just think ! She will be my wife !

Before my eyes, bright as a rainbow vision, the world is
dancing.

With happiness my heart will burst.

Marta is mine my wife this very day.

TOMMASO (to Moruccio).

How could you imagine that Sebastiano? . . .

MORUCCIO.

If you're curious to know, just ask him,
Your Lord Sebastiano. Look, he's coming now.

SCENE 7.

(The above. Sebastiano—afterwards Marta, Nuri, Rosalia, Antonia, Pepa.)

NURI.

The master's coming! Our owner and master.
(Enter Sebastiano.)

SEBASTIANO.

Has Pedro not arrived?

PEDRO.

Yes, here I am; I'm here, my lord!
Let me kiss your hands most humbly.

SEBASTIANO.

No, no! And where is Marta?

PEPA.

In her chamber, master.

SEBASTIANO.

Then go and fetch her out.
(Pepa off to the left.)

SEBASTIANO (to Pedro).

To ev'rything I've seen, the priest is on his way,
And in an hour you will be man and wife—
A vow, a blessing, and the thing is over.

PEDRO.

O master, sir, how can I ever thank you?

PEPA (coming back from Marta's room).
She'll soon be coming, Marta bids me tell you.

SEBASTIANO.

What's that you tell me? Soon she'll be coming?
Without delay she must be here when I am calling.
(He goes to the foot of the stairs and calls up.)
Marta!

TOMMASO (following him).

Sir, I would speak with you,
There's something weighing heavily on my mind.

SEBASTIANO.

What do I care what's weighing on your mind?
Another time.

TOMMASO.

To save my peace of mind! Let it be now.
(At this moment Marta appears at the head of the stairs.)

SEBASTIANO.

At last then. (Vexed, to Tommaso.) Later, later!

MARTA (coming down).

I'm here, my lord, at your command!
(She comes quite close to Sebastiano softly.)
Oh, spare me this! Oh, for the love of heav'n
Have pity on my misery!

SEBASTIANO (aloud).

You are not merry, Marta!
Look at your Pedro now; he knows when he is lucky!

NURI.

Oh, look, poor Marta's crying.

THE WOMEN.

She's crying, unhappy child.

MARTA.

(Quickly wiping away the tears.)

Who says so? Who? Who saw me crying?
The master commands—and I am merry.
Look! I'm laughing.

PEDRO.

That is all right. There's nothing merrier
Than a wedding. Eh, good people?

(They all laugh. To Marta.)

How ev'ry one rejoices in our joy!
You only have not said a word to me.
A single word! Speak to me then!

MARTA.

We must be going.

SEBASTIANO (pointing to Pedro's coat).

Who ever saw a bridegroom
In rags and tatters and in ribbons?
I've ordered a garment for you, lad.
You must look smart and well attir'd.
An elegant young man, a dandy you shall be.
'Tis fitting surely for a bridegroom.

THE MEN (laughing).

An elegant young man

THE WOMEN.

A dandy!

PEDRO.

A dandy? What is that?

ROSALIA.

A dandy is a fop.

PEDRO.

What is a fop?

(All laugh louder.)

Do you laugh at me?

I don't advise it!

With these good fists I'll go for any fellow who will dare'
(He seizes hold of a lad.)

What is a fop? I ask you!

(The women shriek. It looks as if there were going to be a big fight.)

MARTA.

The lazy cowards! They let this yokel give them all a beating.

SEBASTIANO.

Pedro!

PEDRO.

(Suddenly calming down. The excitement ceases.)
Why I had almost lost my temper.

SEBASTIANO.

Go and put on your new gaments, and get you ready,
I see the priest approaching.

PEDRO.

You come along, help to adorn me;
We will be merry and laugh to-day—
Is it not my wedding day, my happy day?
Let us be glad!

(Exeunt the men, with Pedro on the right).

PEPA (to the women).

Come with me. We'll watch from here.

THE WOMEN.

We'll watch from here.

(Exeunt through the gate. At this moment the priest appears in the gateway. The women curtsy reverently).

TOMMASO (to Sebastiano).

I want to speak to you; 'tis most important.

SEBASTIANO (impatiently).

Well, wait for us out there, if it's so pressing,
I'll come at once.

TOMMASO.

I shall await you, sir. (Exit).
(The priest has advanced and is now standing in front of Sebastiano).

SEBASTIANO.

Reverend sir, you come to fetch the bridal pair.
I have to see the bride a moment.
Go in advance and I will send the happy couple on.
As soon as they have reached the chapel, proceed
And do not wait my coming.
Join them together. May Heaven send blessings
On their union.

(Exit the priest).

SCENE 8.

Marta, Sebastiano.

(During the whole last scene Marta has been sitting apathetically on a millstone in the background. Now that the stage is empty, Sebastiano looks at her in silence for a moment).

SEBASTIANO.

Marta !

MARTA.

Do with me what you will, but spare me this,
Don't give me to this fellow.

SEBASTIANO (derisively).

Another man might suit you better !
An elegant soft-spoken gentleman,
Who warbles sweet songs with sentimental grimaces !
And of me you would fain be rid. Have I not guessed it ?
Forgotten are the benefits I lavish'd on you,
This is the thanks for my devotion !

(He wants to caress her, but she turns away with repugnance).

You know me not. I will not stand defiance,
Mine now—mine always !
And no other will you dare to have but mine !
Come here ! Come here, do you hear ?

(He makes a threatening gesture. When he sees that she is going to obey his order, he bursts out laughing).

Tell me, my child, Pedro fill's you with horror.

MARTA.

I cannot tell you with what horror.

SEBASTIANO.

That is allright, just as I want it.
All is going just as I wished it.
Would I tolerate this marriage, think you,
If you liked the bridegroom?

MARTA.

Oh, can there be a man so vile
Who knows what I am and yet takes me!
You paid him for this, the scoundrel—
Shame on him! (Collapsing at the table)
Shame on me!

(Loud laughter heard outside).

SEBASTIANO (with restrained ardour).

Your love will soon make amends for all,
Your love for me! Is that not so?

MARTA.

Leave me, for you frighten me!

SEBASTIANO.

You know it, Marta, you know it well,
I love nothing in the world but you—
Leave you I never will,
And if I give you to another man,
'Tis merely done because I must.
My affection, my joy—harsh gossip looks askance at it!
To silence evil tongues you'll marry
Pedro—and all remains unaltered!
For mine you are, and I will never leave you!
I love you now and I will always love you!
I long for you and cannot live without you.
I claim you mine, and you shall not escape.

MARTA.

I'm frightened of you, sir.

SEBASTIANO.

You're not to be afraid; you are to love me!

MARTA (repulsing him).

Sebastiano !

SEBASTIANO.

You know me not ! Take care, you know me not !
I suffer no resistance, for none have dared to cross me

(Loud laughter heard outside).

Then you will go to church ?

MARTA.

Yes.

SEBASTIANO.

And you will marry Pedro ?

MARTA.

Yes.

SEBASTIANO.

And still be mine ?

MARTA (shrinking away from him),

No, no !

(Renewed laughter outside).

(Marta involuntarily seeks refuge close to Sebastiano).

Hark, they're coming now,
They're coming now to fetch me !

SEBASTIANO (laughs triumphantly).

That is right, that does me good,
From him—you fly to me !

SCENE 9.

Rosalia, Antonia, Pepa, Nuri, men and women come on—af-
wards Tommaso.

THE MEN.

He will not be a fop !

THE WOMEN.

He will not wear the clothes you gave him.

PEDRO.

You shall not make a dressed up fool of me!
Let him who likes put on this fin'ry,
I won't. My shabby jacket here suits me far better.

SEBASTIANO.

Well, as you like. You can be wed just as you are.
Marta, take your mantilla.

MARTA.

Yes, sir, I am quite ready.
(Softly to Sebastiano.)
And all is o'er between us two.

SEBASTIANO (softly to Marta.)

Really? You'll find you're wrong.
To-night I'm coming to you.
If in your room you see a light
You'll know I am there.

NURI.

Here, Marta, your mantilla.
(Tommaso comes in by the gate.)

MARTA.

'Tis you, Nuri, my little friend,
Who brings me my mantilla.

NURI.

Oh, say, Marta, you love me now
And always will.

MARTA.

Yes, my child.
(Sebastiano) Look here, a child, an innocent child, like Nuri
I was once myself.
Thus to this mill I once came hither.

SEBASTIANO (shrugs his shoulders).

Come on to the chapel.

Outside, before the gate, which is wide open, the procession
begins to form. Some men carry torches. Marta, leaning on
Nuri, goes towards the exit, where Pedro is awaiting her. Men
and women crowd after her.)

TOMMASO (to Sebastiano).

I must speak to you, sir;
They must not marry
Until you have answered my question.

SEBASTIANO (to Tommaso).

What is it that you want of me?
(To the departing people) Go, friends, go; I'll follow on.

PEDRO.

(Clearing the way in the background.)

Ohe! Off with you!
Hi, there! my lambkins, make way.
Let me walk beside my Marta, please!
Now, then, hi!
(Amidst laughter and jodeling they all go off in disorder.)

SCENE 10.

Sebastiano. Tommaso. Moruccio.

SEBASTIANO.

Well, what is it, Moruccio?
Are you not going to the church?

MORUCCIO.

No pow'r on earth shall make me go.

SEBASTIANO.

Why ever not? Your reason—

MORUCCIO.

I will not; that must satisfy you.

SEBASTIANO.

Then let it satisfy you if I tell you,
Pack your bundle and be off!

MORUCCIO.

Right gladly, too.

(He goes to the background, where he spreads out his mantle sort of shawl with a colored pattern, collects his tools, which scattered about the stage, and lays them in it.)

SEBASTIANO (to Tommaso).

And now for you!

TOMMASO.

Such curious rumors came to my ears
Of you and Marta, and I can't believe them.
Why, it would be dishonest to poor Pedro,
Who has no notion what the folk are saying.

SEBASTIANO.

Why do you stop to listen tō silly rumors?
The people gossip, let them gossip.
No word of all they say is true.

TOMMASO (clenching his fist at Moruccio).

I thought as much, you vagabond,
You scamp, you liar!

SEBASTIANO.

He told you that? Be off, scoundrel!
Outside with you, or you will rue it!
I'll have you hounded like a dog from out the country.

MORUCCIO

(ready to start, scans him from head to foot.)

Me? Just let me see if you would dare!

TOMMASO.

How can you dare speak so to your master?

MORUCCIO.

My master? He's that no more—
I would that he had never been it.

SEBASTIANO.

Be off!

MORUCCIO.

I'm going now. But ere I go,
Let me repeat the honest truth before Tommaso,
That he may know, which of us two is the liar here.
'Tis you that lie! Think you I did not see
How ev'ry night you stole to Marta's room?

Think you I do not know
 Why you are forcing Marta
 To take this fool as husband?
 The truth I'm speaking. See! I lift up my hand,
 And swear it by the soul of my dead mother,
 That 'tis the truth I'm speaking.
 Your mother, too, lies in her grave.
 Then, swear as I do,
 If you dare!

SEBASTIANO.

Heed not his words!

TOMMASO.

Holy Virgin, help!
 I see it now,
 It may not be!
 I'll hasten to the chapel,
 And I'll say: No!
 (At this moment the chapel bells begin to peal.)
 The bells are ringing.
 Oh, it is too late!

(To Sebastiano.)

Oh, what have you done?
 What have you done?

SEBASTIANO.

What's done is past undoing,
 So calm yourself and—good night.
 (Exit.)

TOMMASO.

O my God, forgive me for this unintended infamy!

MORUCCIO.

(Tapping him on the shoulder.)
 I'm going, will you come? I'm going up.
 Up to my mountains I'm returning,
 Where I can see the sky and grassy meadows,
 Far, far from people. Will you come?

TOMMASO.

Oh, would that Pedro never had come hither!

MORUCCIO (in the gateway).

Will you come?

(From afar the procession is heard approaching with cries of
"Long live the happy pair.")

TOMMASO.

Oh, what disgrace and scandal!

I cannot see them,

I cannot, will not! Hence!

(Both go off.)

SCENE 11.

(The stage remains empty a moment, then the procession is heard approaching. Marta comes on the stage. Pedro remains standing in the gateway, waiving farewells to the passers-by.)

PEDRO.

The wedding day is o'er.

Good comrades, get you home!

Farewell! Let ev'ry sheep rest in its fold! Good night!

Now run away! Be gone!

This way the ewes, that way the rams!

Hi! How they're swarming down the hill!

A VOICE FROM OUTSIDE.

Make fast the gate and lock yourselves in!

Sleep well!

(Loud laughter outside, the voices die away.)

PEDRO (calling after them).

May Heaven be with you.

(He locks the gate and comes to the front. Marta is sitting with bowed head at the table.)

PEDRO.

The gate is closed—

We are alone—

Now speak to me, just one word, Marta, my love,

Ah, I know a better word than that!

Marta, my wife.

MARTA.

What is it? Leave me alone—

PEDRO.

Why, what is wrong?
Come here, sit by my side!

(He sits down on the ground and laughs.)

Now let us be cosy.

(He coaxes her, as shepherds coax their sheep, and then laughs to himself in childlike glee.)

I'm waiting, come!

MARTA (remains sitting motionless).

Leave me!

PEDRO.

Listen, sweetheart, even if I am but rough,
You are not gracious.

Wait a minute, I will punish you.

I had something to tell you, and now I shall not—

(He stands behind her and collects money from his pockets. Then he fetches out a little handkerchief from his breast-pocket containing some silver coins.)

(To himself.)

I have a little present to surprise her!

'Tis nice and heavy!

(He softly draws close to Marta and laughs quietly to himself. When he is close behind her, he touches her head and her shoulder with one finger, and imitates the cuckoo.)

Cuckoo!

MARTA (shrinks back startled).

How could you? Is that your idea of joking?

PEDRO (Laughing).

Do not be cross!

(He has taken the silver coins from his handkerchief and now stands, holding them awkwardly in his hands.)

Give me your hand a moment.

(Pause. She takes no notice.)

Marta, your hand!

(He offers her the money.)

MARTA.

(Takes no notice whatever of his hand and crosses over to the other side.)

Stop all this nonsense ! I am not in the mood for laughing.
It is late, 'tis bed time, Pedro.

PEDRO.

You self-willed child ! What can I do ?
(He spreads out the handkerchief on the ground.)

Look here, this is a dollar,
The first I ever earned myself.
And that's my blood. Ha, ha !

(He laughs).

The master, Lord Sebastiano, the noble lord,
Gave me this dollar.
God's blessing on the worthy man.
Do take the dollar then ! Don't be afraid !
'Tis money fairly earned.

MARTA.

(Motions away his hand, but this time without repugnance.)
No, no, I will not.

PEDRO.

You think perhaps I earned it easily?
My life I ventured for it, yes, my life!
For ev'ry night a cruel wolf attacked our fold
And captured a lambkin,
Our finest dog he mangled,
It almost drove me crazy!
I was furious, ill, and nigh despairing;
To myself I said:
That wolf I'll do for, and if I die for't!
So I lie down one night
And hide myself in the boulders
And wait for him.
The grizzly thief, the wicked wolf
He was not to escape me—

(Marta begins to pay attention.)

So there I lay on the alert,
Quite hidden in my corner—
The hours passed by, and o'er my head
The stars began to vanish.
And from the snowfield
I heard the water dripping,
Then ev'rything was still, quite still.
A sudden rushing in the grass,
A sudden leap close o'er my head,
And it is gone.

I felt a burning breath upon my neck,
 That was the wolf.
 The sheepdog barks, the lambs start bleating,
 I jump up and draw my knife,
 And as I stand with weapon ready
 I see good master wolf trot by.
 —The grizzly thief, the wicked wolf,—
 A bleeding lamb in his mouth.
 Now swift as thought I spring at the beast,
 My knife is in his heart.
 What happened then, I really hardly know.
 I held him closely locked as he did me.
 He bellowed and I yelled.
 I hit him and I felt
 How his pointed teeth were tearing my flesh to pieces.
 Thus locked together down the hill we roll,
 A shapeless raging bundle,
 Two savage wild beasts
 Who fight for their lives in frenzy. . . .
 And so we roll together in the torrent.

(Marta listens with growing interest.)

They brought me home into my cabin,
 Attended to my wounds—
 There did I lie for many weeks
 In sorry plight.
 At last one day, when in the sunshine I was sitting
 The master climb'd the hill to visit me
 And he gave me this dollar.
 And when I was about to kiss his hand,
 Out of my scarcely healed-up wound
 My blood welled forth, and dyed the dollar red.
 That silver piece was hardly earned not so?

MARTA (touched).

'Tis growing late. To rest we now must go.

PEDRO.

Then take the money, I give it you—

MARTA.

No, no, indeed I can't.
 And now, good night!
 This is the way to *your* room—go—
 (She points to the right.)

PEDRO.

The way to *my* room?
 'Tis your turn to joke?
 The way to *our* room must be there.
 (He points to the left.)

MARTA.

'Tis not a joke, leave me alone.

PEDRO.

You wish. . . that I. . .
 You really mean it?

MARTA (in confusion).

Oh, force me not to speak,
 Else I must tell you
 The load that on my heart is weighing;
 I will be silent, or else I must tell you
 How you have treated me. You know it well:
 Vile it was, and shameful?

PEDRO (nonplussed).

What's that you say? Whatever have I done?
 And by what right do you speak so to me?
 What do you say I know?

MARTA (full of shame).

What they told you.

PEDRO.

Told me? They told me nothing!

MARTA.

Am I to be disgraced and forced to repeat it?
 For you must know it,
 You must know what you did
 When you agreed to marry me.

PEDRO.

What I did? Why yes, I know it well—
 When Love called me, I ran to seize it!
 And I will hold it, and will prize it
 As long as breath and life remain!

There's nought I love on earth but only you!
 And this shall be my only care:
 Your happiness, your happiness!

(At this moment a light appears behind the curtain which conceals Marta's door.)

MARTA (horrorstruck).

O, holy Virgin, lend me aid!
 He dares to come.

PEDRO (surprised).

A light? Within your room a light?
 We are not alone!

MARTA (tries to conceal her terror).

No one is here.

PEDRO.

And I tell you, I am not mistaken.

(He looks in his pocket for his knife, and goes towards the door.)

MARTA (stops him).

No one is there—The light inside my chamber——
 I myself have lighted.

PEDRO.

That cannot be—It was not there
 Wher we came here this evening.

(The light disappears.)

See, 'tis extinguished now.

MARTA.

You're dazed, or you are dreaming.

PEDRO.

Did you not say yourself just now
 There was a light within your room?
 Now it is gone.

MARTA.

You dream, for I saw nothing there.

PEDRO.

You saw no light ?

MARTA.

No, I repeat, you must have dreamed;
There was no light within my chamber.

PEDRO (looking at her doubtfully).

I'm dreaming it ?

MARTA (to herself).

How dare he this evening ?

PEDRO (confused to himself).

I did not see a light ?

It was a dream ?

MARTA.

(Sits down on a chair, and rests her chin on the back of it.)

I mean to spend the night in here.

(Pointing to the door on the right.)

I told you once before, 'tis bedtime.

PEDRO.

I heard you. My room on that side——

And yours—— But I'm not going yet.

(He sits down on the ground, and gradually stretches himself out.)

MARTA (to herself).

My throbbing head is all confused——

(In great distress).

Heartless he was always, and cruel,

But ne'er would I have thought

That he could be so wicked.

(Dejectedly.)

And this unhappy lad, he thinks I do not see

Or notice him at all.

PEDRO.

(Sadly, almost in tears, but resigned.)

What shall I do ? I cannot tell

Ah, well, I'll wait! I'll think I am

Sleeping up there on the mountain.
I shall be near to you at least.

(He creeps unobserved close to Marta.)

And now one Paternoster
For my beloved parents,
Who are up in Heaven
With God.

To-night the second Paternoster I will not say,
For a wife I have at last,
Whom Heav'n has sent to me

MARTA.

Have pity, Lord Almighty,
How fearful is Thy punishment!

PEDRO (half asleep).

Rest all around us. Peace ev'rywhere—
The wolf won't come to-night. No—no—

(As he is moving his lips in his sleep, as though to speak, the curtain slowly falls.)

End of Act 1.

Act II.

The same scene of action as in Act 1.

SCENE 1.

Marta and Pedro are sitting in the same position as at the end of Act 1. Dawn.

NURI (behind the scenes).

The stars have gone to their rest,
For they must sleep awhile,
Dawn greets the world with a smile.

(Marta has awakened. She glances at Pedro, who is still asleep, and then goes to the back. She busies herself in the house, and then disappears, during Nuri's song, into her room.)

NURI (continuing).

Hearts must be light and gay
When sunshine gilds the day.
The world is brave, the world is fair,
The sun with happiness fills the air.
I wish I could kiss ev'ry golden ray,
But kiss it, nay, 'tis too far away—
It is so far, and I am so small—
A poor little maiden after all.

(With the last words Nuri enters by the middle door. She is knitting a woolen jersey.)

Good morrow, Pedro!

PEDRO (awaking).

Marta !

NURI (laughing).

'Tis not your Marta,
Only I.

PEDRO.

And where is Marta !

NURI.

Why ask of me ?
Are you not Marta's husband ?
And have been so since yester evening !

PEDRO (bitterly).

Since yester evening !

NURI.

I'm knitting you a pretty woollen jacket
For yours is so grey and shabby——

PEDRO.

No use, my child, for I shall never wear it,
Before you've finished it, I shall be far.

NURI (in alarm).

Far, Pedro ?

PEDRO.

Yes, far away from Marta. It drives me mad.
Who lit that light within her chamber ?
Ah, who ?
I want to kill him ! I shall not rest
Until I've plunged my knife into his craven body !

NURI.

Why, what's the matter ?

PEDRO (recollecting himself).

Forgive me, child !

NURI.

Have you been hurt ?

(Pedro shakes his head negatively.)

I know quite well what's hurting you.
Is Marta not kind to you ?
And are they all laughing ?

PEDRO.

Are they all laughing ?

NURI.

They all are saying : " Oh, that poor Pedro "
And laughing and tittering.
I wonder why ?

PEDRO.

Yes, why? Ah, why?
 They all know my dishonour—
 But I, I know not who it was.
 Oh, why did I come down?
 Come down from my dear mountains
 Where I dwelt contented?

NURI.

You make me sad!
 What can I do to help you?
 I like you so. Can I not comfort you?

PEDRO.

(Stroking her hair.)

My pretty child!

SCENE 2.

Pedro. Nuri. Marta.

NURI.

Here is Marta. I must be going.

PEDRO.

No, don't go—stay awhile.

MARTA (to herself).

What can he want with Nuri?
 What can he have to say?
 He surely can't admire—

(She goes to the hearth and pokes the fire, over which a pot is hanging.)

Stupid fire, won't you burn up brighter?—
 What are they talking about? . . .
 They shall not! Shall not!

NURI (going up to Marta).

What news this morning?

MARTA.

O, Nuri, you shall have the latest news:
 I've seen enough of you!
 Be off, out of this house!—

NURI.

Do you hear that, Pedro?
Marta turns me out.
I wished to help her.

MARTA.

I want no help—Begone, or I'll drive you out!

NURI.

Whatever have I done?

MARTA.

I do not want to see you!

NURI.

I shall not go till Pedro says I must,
He is the master here.

MARTA.

Well then, let Pedro say it also.

PEDRO.

Go then, and do as Marta says,
For here I count for nothing,
Be good, my child and go.

MARTA.

No, stay awhile, I want you, after all.

NURI (crying).

What shall I do?

PEDRO.

Best go my child,
And I am coming with you.

MARTA.

No; that you sha'nt!
You stay with me.
For you-----

(Breaks off, for he has stopped short and is gazing at her very straight.)

PEDRO.

For I ?

MARTA (in confusion).

I know not, cannot tell.

(She sinks crying on to a chair.)

PEDRO (sarcastically)

Do you believe that Marta's crying ?
Not in the least ! Just the reverse, she's laughing !
How we have both laughed since yesterday,
Since our wedding day.

(He puts his arm round Nuri and leads her away.)

Then come, my little girl, and follow me,
And ne'er come to this house again.
What would you here ?
Here dwells misfortune,
Here dwell we—

(Exit with Nuri.)

MARTA (after them ; bursts out suddenly).

He shall not speak to Nuri !

He shall not go with her !

Is he not mine ?

And none shall rob me of my Pedro !

(As she is hurrying to the gate she runs into Tommaso.)

SCENE 3.

Marta. Tommaso.

TOMMASO.

Whither so fast ?

MARTA.

I do not know ! Indeed I do not know !

TOMMASO.

I just met Pedro and he seemed
Quite desperate.

MARTA.

Quite desperate!

TOMMASO.

The people laugh and he cannot tell why.
 They mock at him and he can see no reason—
 They're all aware of his dishonour,
 But he alone has got no clue—
 But he will ask me: Who, ah who is the man?
 Who can it be? For I will kill him!
 And I, I was the sponsor of this marriage.
 Oh how I hate you! I could beat you!

MARTA.

Then do!

TOMMASO.

I know now what you are. You are a—

MARTA.

No, you may beat me, not revile me.
 Tell me, Tommaso, had you not a child?

TOMMASO.

I had a child. She is in Heaven now.

MARTA.

Think of your daughter ere you judge me harshly!
 Had you died first and left her,
 Friendless and unprotected in a wicked world,
 In want and mis'ry, who would give her help?
 O, God Almighty! take pity on me,
 And let me come unto Thee!
 Only Thou canst save me,
 Only Thou canst redeem me!

(She sinks weeping on to a chair.)

TOMMASO.

You're crying? And your tears are genuine?

MARTA.

Ah, let me tell you how it all came.
 The truth I speak, the plain unvarnished truth!
 Will you hear me?

TOMMASO.

Speak on.

MARTA.

I know not who my father was.
 I never saw or heard of him.
 My mother begged for alms in Parcelona,
 In summer heat and winter snowstorm.
 I stood with her, for she was blind,
 Outside the church doors and at busy corners.
 She never spoke. With begging outstretched hand
 She just stood there, while I clung to her skirts
 And cried from utter weariness and hunger.
 And then one day there came a man to us, a lame old
 cripple.
 Then we stood and begged all three. My mother and
 the cripple
 Would often fight and quarrel
 All thro' the weary night.
 Oh what a life of wretched shame was mine!
 Then came a night when all was strangely still
 Dumb on the ground was mother lying
 Dumb sat the cripple by her side.
 But in the morning he got up
 And said to me : "She is dead."
 His words I did not understand,
 But long years after I understood what I had lost.

TOMMASO.

And then what happened ?

MARTA.

From Barcelona day by day we wandered
 Through the plains from place to place.
 And I grew up. How willingly
 Would I have sought for work !
 But still the cripple held me captive
 Because my dancing drew the folk together
 And used to make them stare and throw me money.
 He was contented. And what did he care,
 If thro' the weary nights I lay weeping.

TOMMASO.

Unhappy child !

MARTA.

And so one day our wanderings led me hither.
 I danced before the peasants
 And the old man went about and passed his hat for
 money.

And then a man came up, the people called him master.
 'Twas Sebastiano. He stroked my glossy hair
 And bade me tell him how it happened
 That I had grown so pretty,
 And where I learnt to dance?
 'Twas he who spoke the first kind words I heard.
 And then the master saw the cripple,
 And asked him whether he would like to stay here,
 And take the post of miller.
 I pleaded with my eyes: No need to beg again,
 No need to dance to keep ourselves from starving!
 The cripple then whispered to Sebastiano.
 They bargained and they haggled—and we stayed.
 I then was 14 years of age.
 And Sebastiano came here daily,
 He brought me costly presents, begged and threatened,
 The old man beat me, even tore my hair out.
 Unless I yielded to the master,
 Our peace and comfort would be over,
 Once more a life of begging and of dancing. . .
 No, no, no! And that is how I fell.

TOMMASO.

You poor unfortunate!

MARTA.

Yes unfortunate, but not bad!

TOMMASO

God punish Sebastiano!

MARTA.

My life was wretched, I was fettered
 By my disgrace.
 The master made me marry Pedro.
 I vowed I never would,
 But how could I, a poor young thing
 Defy the master?

TOMMASO.

And I, alas, assisted him!

MARTA.

A marvel occurred:
 While we were in the chapel, I seemed to hear
 A message from above: This is your mate,

Your rock and shield, and he will save you
 From all your grief and pain.
 And Pedro . . . Pedro loves me,
 He loves me truly, tho' I am unworthy

TOMMASO.

And Pedro does not know,
 But soon will learn your story, and then will despise you—

MARTA.

Despise me you say? He may!
 Since I am certain that he loves me!
 As certain as I am that I too love him!
 Yes, now I know it.
 And all the world may hear it!
 My heart will overflow.
 Just as the torrent melts the ice in spring,
 Love's mighty torrent thro' my heart is surging.
 I love him, Tommaso, hark to me!
 And he may beat me, he may kill me,
 And make me suffer as he will.
 I love him, he is mine and I am his—

TOMMASO.

Nay, if you love him, you have but one course,
 The truth you have to tell him.

MARTA.

I am to tell him? To confess my shame to Pedro?
 And if he goes? Suppose that I should lose him?

TOMMASO.

He must be told it! Must be told by you!
 Enough of falsehood! Have the strength to tell him!

MARTA

Then pray for me!

TOMMASO.

That I will do!
 I will pray Heav'n to grant you perfect strength
 To go through this ordeal. Have faith in God
 Who helpeth all. He worketh wonders
 Thro' the pow'r of love.

MARTA (kneeling down before him)
Then bless me.

TOMMASO.

The Lord enfold you in His arms,
His ever-loving arms,
And give you courage, faith and strength,
For he is merciful.
Have faith in Him and you are strong,
Look up to Him
And in His mercy place your hope !
(Voices, laughter and chattering heard in the background).

MARTA.

O here is Nuri together with the women.
I don't want to see them—Farewell.
(off).

SCENE 4.

Tommaso, Rosalia, Antonia, Pepa, Nuri.

PEPA.

There is Tommaso, he must tell us.

ANTONIA.

Where is Marta? Where is Pedro?

ROSALIA.

Do tell us what took place.

TOMMASO.

I do not know.

PEPA.

He wants to go (detaining him)
Oh, can't you wait a moment?

TOMMASO.

Peace be with you all!

(Exit).

ANTONIA.

The mean old crosspatch, he will not tell us.

NURI.

He does not know, but I know all.

ALL THREE WOMEN (together).

O darling Nuri, dearest, sweetest child
Do tell us all—do say, what has occurred?

NURI (laughing).

Don't make a noise, for Pedro's coming
If you are so curious
Ask him yourselves.

SCENE 5.

(The above. Enter Pedro.)

(All retire to the back, Pedro comes forward and sits down).

PEPA.

What, so sullen, so dejected!

ROSALIA.

The morning after the wedding!

ANTONIA.

No civil word for us?

PEDRO.

What want you here?

THE THREE WOMEN.

We bring you corn to grind.
Is there water in the basin, and is the wheel at work?

PEDRO.

Set down your baskets there,
And I will see your corn is ground.

PEPA.

You're looking ill.

ANTONIA.

Are you ill?

ROSALIA.

Are you not well?

PEDRO.

What's that to do with you?

ANTONIA.

But where is Marta?

PEDRO.

That's no concern of yours!

ROSALIA.

Mayn't one enquire how Marta is

The day after the wedding?

(They all three laugh).

PEDRO.

Why the devil are you laughing?

PEPA.

We're not laughing at all.

ANTONIA (laughing).

No, nobody has laughed.

PEDRO.

I wan't stand it any longer,

I'll force you to speak!

Stop your laughing, once for all!

(He catches hold of Pepa)

You speak for all!

You laughed last night, and laughed to-day.

What have I done to you?

And what has Marta?

(He shakes her with both arms. The women shriek. Pepa tears herself free. Pedro seizes Rosalia).

You are to answer me, you shameless woman!

ROSALIA.

You are a fool!

(Pedro seizes her by the throat).

PEDRO.

A fool am I? Yes, you are right!

Yet you drive me to madness!

If for your life you care, then answer me!

What was it made you laugh?

ANTONIA (pointedly).

You'd best ask Marta!

THE THREE WOMEN.

You'd best ask Marta?

PEDRO.

(recollecting himself).

Marta? I am to ask her?

THE THREE WOMEN (as they go off).

Ask Marta?

NURI.

(Has till now been standing timidly in the background. She now comes forward and lays her hand on Pedro's shoulder).

Ask Marta!

THE THREE WOMEN.

For here she comes! (They all run off.

SCENE 6.

Pedro. Marta.

MARTA.

(Has come down, has taken the pot from the fire and put it on the table.)

Your dinner is there!

(She adds a loaf and a knife.)

PEDRO.

I cannot eat it, Marta,
I've something to tell you.

MARTA (coming close to him).

What have you to tell me?

PEDRO (stretching out his arm).

Do not come near me, go !
I'm going back to my mountains, whence I came;
Farewell !

MARTA.

You shall not go. For love of Jesus Christ
Forgive me !

PEDRO.

I am to forgive you? When you have deceived me?
To spurn you, to curse you is what I ought !
I ought to kill you !

MARTA.

Yes kill me, I beg and pray you for it.

PEDRO.

To kill you, no. I'll go away
And never more behold you.

MARTA.

(In desperation tries to detain him.)

Where is your courage? Come and kill me !
No, you are afraid, faint-hearted coward you !

PEDRO.

Afraid ?

MARTA.

Revile me, beat me, trample upon me !
Strike with your knife straight at my heart—
But do not go.

(he ngs to his knees).

PEDRO.

The Lowland kills me, let me seek my mountains;
You stay down in the mire—with him!

(He frees himself from her clasp, pushes her away and goes towards the gate. She has fallen down, and raises herself slightly, raising herself on one arm.)

MARTA.

(Nearly beside herself with desperation, laughing and crying at the same time.)

With him whom I love! Yes, you speak true!
I have deceived you, mark what I say!
You are a coward, afraid to strike—
Do not leave me! Pedro!
I belonged to another man—
His was I. Now do you hear?
His and not thine!

PEDRO.

(Turns back furiously and threatens her with his fist.)
Silence!

MARTA.

(Gets up, visibly contented that he has not gone.)

Oh, can't you see it? How stupid you are!
I have deceived you, and laugh at the fact.

(She laughs like one mad.)

I laugh as they all did.
The wedding was merry; they all were laughing, and he,
He was laughing, too.

PEDRO.

(Rushes to the table and seizes the knife.)
May the Lord strike me if I don't—

MARTA.

(Hanging on his left arm.)
The other was laughing, ha, ha, ha!

PEDRO (brandishing the knife).

You'll die for this!

MARTA.

Then pluck up courage, prepare to strike!
And show that you are not afraid!

PEDRO (retreats from her again
I can do nought to harm you !

MARTA.

(Seeing that he is turning from her, tries to provoke him anew.)

Oh, what a craven you must be !
All for some paltry money your honour you have sold.
(She looks at him provocatively.)

PEDRO.

(Beside himself, brandishes the knife towards her.)

My honour sold ?
You liar !

(He wounds her arm.)

MARTA.

Ah, rapture !

PEDRO.

(Flinging the knife away in horror.)
Oh, what have I done ?

MARTA.

At last your hand has struck me ;
Could you but know how happy I am !

PEDRO.

Accurst am I ! I'm but a savage beast !
(He drops into a chair, resting his head in his hands in despair.)

MARTA.

(Comes close to him, kneels down and puts her arms round him).

You did no more than duty asked !
I longed to die, to die thro' you !
And I implore you, strike here, right thro' my heart !

PEDRO.

(Horried, tries to throw her off).

Leave me !

MARTA.

(Weeping, holding him fast in her arms).

Can you not see that I am weary of life?
 I long to die! How I should bless it,
 Death by your hand!
 From sin and sorrow naught will cleanse me
 Excepting death.
 Believe me, my Pedro, trust my words,
 I was not bad, but only wretched.
 A cruel world has treated me so hardly,
 And crushed my happiness!
 Only a fleeting glimpse of joy
 Your hand can give me.
 Kill me then, and end my suff'rings.

PEDRO.

(Folding her in his arms).

I am to kill you? You, whom I worship?
 For since first I saw you,
 I have loved you to madness.
 What do I care, who you may be?
 What do I care, what you have done?
 For you have bewitched me, I can't escape
 From your heart's magic.
 And strive against it as I may,
 I fall but more and more beneath your spell.
 I want to kiss you, want to hold you,
 Never be parted from you!
 I'll bear you off within my arms
 Unto my mountains,
 'Mid raging storm and whirling snow,
 Up in my mountains' purer air
 There will we celebrate our real wedding.
 There no one can rob me, no one,
 There you'll be mine, mine, mine!

(She has sunk half fainting into his arms. He draws her towards the gate).

Now come who dare, I will defy him.

MARTA (regaining consciousness).

My God!

PEDRO

(Raises her, as though to kiss her).

Now you are mine!

MARTA (turning away).

No, no !

PEDRO (ardently).

Marta !

MARTA.

Ah, do not kiss me till you hear
What I have to tell you.
You must hear from me, how all came to pass,
And judge me then !
Then do what God may prompt you to !

PEDRO.

No, no, not here !

PEDRO AND MARTA.

First let us arise and go to the mountains
Where we are close to Heaven
And near to God Himself, { there will I tell you
 } there shall you tell me
All that oppresses { my } soul.
 your }
For Love is like a mighty stream.
It purifies all sorrow.
In God's own heart it doth arise,
In God's own hand its pathway lies,
And { if you love me you } will forgive !
 { as I love you I }

PEDRO.

Then come !

(They go towards the gate).

SCENE 7.

Marta, Pedro, Sebastiano, then men and women.

SEBASTIANO.

(Meets them both).

Give you good day ! What may the news be ?

PEDRO.

'Tis well that you come. Take back the mill you gave
me.
I'm going back whence I came.

SEBASTIANO.

(Without heeding him, to Marta).

I'm waiting for the father of my bride,
Till he comes, let's be merry.
You used to dance to please me,
Dance for me now ! I'll play the tune.

(Meanwhile the peasants, men and women, have entered. Sebastiano takes a guitar from one of them).

Dance, do you hear ?

(He plays and sings).

Come, throw your mantilla around you with grace
And dance me a lively measure.
Now foot it, beloved, with nimble pace
Dance for my pleasure.
Spin round in tune with the music I play,
While lightly as air to and fro you sway,
Now foot it, beloved, with agile pace
Dance for my pleasure.

PEDRO.

Enough ! and you, Marta, come away !

SEBASTIANO.

(continues to play and sing unconcernedly)
And see that your dancing betrays what you feel,
Show how your heart is beating,
And let your eyes the bliss reveal
Of lovers' meeting.
Of stolen kisses and joys I could sing,
Of arms that caress and lips that cling.
And let your eyes the bliss reveal
Of lovers' meeting.

PEDRO.

Marta, come away !

SEBASTIANO (angrily)

What's that he says ?

MARTA.

He says . . .

PEDRO.

We must away !

MARTA.

We must away !

SEBASTIANO.

(Beside himself seizes Marta by the arm).
You are demented ! It must not be !

PEDRO.

What are you doing, Sir ?

SEBASTIANO (to Pedro)

I'm keeping what's mine.

PEDRO.

Is Marta not my wife ?

(Sebastiano laughs).

MARTA.

I'll go with Pedro, and you have no right
To forbid me.

SEBASTIANO.

No right ? That we will see !

(To the people).

Turn out this fellow from here !

(To Marta)

And you stay here !

PEDRO.

(Taking Marta by the hand)

My wife is mine, and we will go.

SEBASTIANO.

Take that for your presumption, you rogue, you vagabond !

(Gives him a box on the ear).

PEDRO (yells out in a fury).

Ah !

MARTA.

Pedro, he has struck you !
Take vengeance for't.

PEDRO (crying with rage).

How dare I?
He is the master!

MARTA.

The master, he?
He was the man who drove your wife
To shame and to disgrace.
He brought misfortune over me
And you—
He stole last night into my chamber!

PEDRO.

What's that you say? . . . You?
(He is about to throw himself on Sebastiano in a frenzy, but the
others hold him of
You villain! You thief!

SEBASTIANO.

Turn him out!

PEDRO.

I'll murder you!

SEBASTIANO.

Why this delay? Away with him!

PEDRO.

Let me go! Hands off!
I'll kill you! I'll murder you!

SEBASTIANO (taking hold of Marta).

She shall remain mine for ever!

MARTA.

Pedro, my Pedro, help!

PEDRO.

I'll save you, as true as God's in Heav'n above.
I'll save you!

(The men drag off the furious Pedro, and Sebastiano, laughing
and triumphant, turns to Marta who has fallen down unconscious).

SCENE 8.

(Tommaso appears in the gateway).

SEBASTIANO.

What is it now?

TOMMASO.

The father of your bride sends you a message.

SEBASTIANO.

Well what is it?

TOMMASO.

He sends you greeting, and the match is off!
For his daughter will never be your bride!

SEBASTIANO.

What the Devil! Who told him the truth?

TOMMASO.

I told him all, I myself.

SEBASTIANO.

Fool, meddling idiot!

(Exit Tommaso).

MARTA.

Holy Virgin, help me now!

SEBASTIANO.

Now I have only you to call my own!
My bride I have lost, and lost I am myself!
You I will never lose!

MARTA.

You may kill me, but I'll not be yours!

SEBASTIANO.

Why, my sweetheart, you are wild.
But I shall find a way to tame you.
The mill at least is mine, and you are mine
Then try not to escape me!

MARTA.

Oh, by what pow'r in Heaven shall I beg you
To give me freedom ?

SEBASTIANO.

The Heavens remain deaf.
Call to your God and all His Saints above,
See, I defy them.
Here is the only refuge left to me,
Here will I stay alone with you,
The world may go to hell for aught I care !

MARTA.

Then will you show no mercy ?

SEBASTIANO.

Love I'll show, but mercy never !
I cannot live without you !
I cannot breathe without you !

MARTA.

And I have also learnt what love is !
I love Pedro—him alone !

SEBASTIANO.

Ah, do not mention him. A curse on him !

MARTA.

I'll call for him with all my might !
My Pedro, come and save me !

SEBASTIANO.

Peace, Marta, you must be raving !

MARTA.

I'm no longer the humble Marta of old,
The weak defenceless child.
I fight not for myself,
I'm fighting for my love, my love and Pedro,
I'm fighting for my happiness !
That Marta whom you knew, is here no longer.
You see a wife, prepared to die
For love and Pedro.

SEBASTIANO.

How grand you look when angry !
Come let me kiss you, con e !

MARTA.

Stand back ! Let go. (She calls) Pedro !

SEBASTIANO.

Call as you may, 'tis useless,
Submit or I will force you——

(After struggling desperately with him Marta frees herself and hurries across the stage.)

MARTA.

Will you no one save me ? (She calls) Pedro !

SEBASTIANO.

No, none will save you ! Mine you are, mine !
And with my kisses will I seal your lips !
(He rushes towards her.)

MARTA.

My Pedro ! Come to me !

SEBASTIANO.

Your cries are useless !
Now let him come and snatch you from me !

SCENE 9.

(The above. Pedro comes out of Marta's room and is on the stage with one bound.)

PEDRO.

I *have* come to snatch her from you !

MARTA (clinging to him).

My Pedro !

SEBASTIANO (retreating).

How come you here ?

PEDRO.

I've come here through the self-same door
Thro' which you came last night
As master and thief.
Now we are alone, man for man!—

SEBASTIANO.

Be off! Quick!

PEDRO.

I am to be off? I?
I am no more the yokel
Whom you came to fetch from Roccabruna—
I am your equal now,
No longer in your service;
Man for man.

SEBASTIANO.

How dare you—wait and see!
(Is about to go to the gate.)

MARTA.

Pedro!

PEDRO.

(With one bound he places himself between Sebastiano and the gate.)

You would escape me? Craven hound!
No, you shan't get away!
'Tis here and now that we will end the matter.
Here stands my wife! I have a right to her!
And yet you dare to claim her!
Take her then! You must fight for her first tho'!
(Draws a knife from his pocket.)

The victor shall possess her.
And he is victor who survives the fight!

SEBASTIANO.

But, you have a knife!
I have none—

PEDRO.

I need it not,
The weapon to destroy you is in my heart.
(He flings away the knife.)
Come, we now fight fair!

MARTA (hurrying up to Pedro).
What are you doing ?

PEDRO (pushes her back).
Stay where you are and let me be !
(To Sebastiano.)
What holds you back ? We now fight fair !

SEBASTIANO.
Your hour has come !
(He rushes to pick up the knife.)

MARTA (shrieks).
Ah!

PEDRO
(Has guessed Sebastiano's intention, bounds forward and places
one foot on the knife.)
You traitor! Can't you fight fairly?
Now, pick up that knife !

SEBASTIANO (shouts).
Curses on you!

PEDRO.
I pity you, your luck is bad !
Your day is over now; your tyranny is ended.
I mean to end it!

MARTA.
O, God in Heaven! Holy Virgin!
Mother of Mercy, send him aid!

SEBASTIANO.
I too can wrestle.

PEDRO.
Well, then try. Defend yourself
(He seizes him by the throat.)
Guard yourself!

SEBASTIANO.
Help! Help!

PEDRO.

Call away! Call your men to save you!

SEBASTIANO.

You are choking me!

MARTA (drops on her knees in horror).
Mother of Mercy!

PEDRO.

No longer can you struggle!
Your life I have extinguished
Like a candle blown out by the wind.

(To Marta.)

Come here, look, he is dead!

(He flings him down on the ground.)

MARTA (rising).

Jesus!

PEDRO

(Looks at the dead man a moment, then he goes to the gate and opens it.)

Hi, lads, come here! You women, too!
All of you come!

SCENE 10.

(The above, men and women, Pepa, Rosalia, Antonia, Nuri, Tommaso. Marta is leaning, half-fainting, against the table.)

THE LADS.

What's this?

PEDRO.

The master calls you!

PEPA (catching sight of the corpse).
Dead?

ROSALIA.

Almighty God!

TOMMASO.

The wrath of Heaven
Has laid him low !
God pardon all such sinners.

PEDRO.

And now, why aren't you laughing? Laugh!
Now is the time for laughing!
Come, Marta, come with me!
For we will go.

MARTA.

Yes, far from here!

PEDRO (lifting her in his arms).

Away up in my mountains,
Away to light and freedom!
Far from the Lowland!
Stand back, you people,
Give us room!
The wicked wolf is dead.
The wolf is dead, and I have killed him!

The curtain falls slowly

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